

Message Text

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SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER GANDHI ON DEMOCRACY AND OTHER SUBJECTS

REF: NEW DELHI 9799

1. THE INDIAN PRESS JULY 1 AND 2 CARRIES LENGTHY EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW RCENTLY GRANTED BY PRIME MINISTER GANDHI TO ONE PROFESSOR ANANDMOHAN OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, NEW YORK. THE INTERVIEW IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN PROFESSOR ANANDMOHAN'S "PICTORIAL NEWSMAGAZINE TRANSINDIA" PUBLISHED IN NEW YORK. THERE IS LITTLE NEW IN WHAT THE PRIME MINISTER SAYS IN DEFENSE OF THE EMERGENCY BUT WE ARE POUCHING TO NEA/INS A COPY OF THE COMPLETE INTERVIEW. THE FOLLOWING EXCERPTS WHICH WE QUOTE, HOWEVER, RELATE TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S VIEWS ON U.S. DEMOCRACY, AND HER SENSITIVITY TO ANY CRITICISMS OF INDIA'S "DEMOCRACY".

2. TO THE QUESTION WHETHER IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT THE "KIND OF DEMOCRACY WE (IN INDIA) HAVE DOES NOT CORRESPOND TO A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TEXT BOOK DEFINITION OF DEMOCRACY", THE PRIME MINISTER

REPLIED. QUOTE WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT TEXT BOOK DEMOCRACY, WHICH COUNTRY HAS TEXT BOOK DEMOCRACY? DID AMERICA HAVE DEMOCRACY IN THE TIME OF MCCARTHY? YOU TAKE EVERY COUNTRY AND YOU WILL FIND SITUATIONS AND PERIODS WHEN THEY HAVE NOT HAD IT. THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF FREEDOM IN THE UNITED STATES, AND YET MUCH OF THE PRESS IS ALSO CONTROLLED. IT IS NOT AS FREE AS IT IS MADE OUT TO BE. YOU HAVE THE UNCOVERING OF WATERGATE BY THE PRESS, OR YOU MAY HAVE OTHER THINGS; BUT BY AND LARGE THERE ARE LOTS OF THINGS WHICH THEY DON'T SAY BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT LIKE IT OR SOMETHING. QUESTION: IT IS A CONFORMIST SOCIETY. MRS. GANDHI: YES, IT IS A CONFORMIST SOCIETY, AND THE PRESS IS IN THE HANDS OF CERTAIN PEOPLE. IT IS NOT FREE IN THE SENSE THAT ANY BODY, THE SMALL MAN, COULD BE ABLE TO HAVE HIS SAY. ALTHOUGH ANYBODY IS FREE TO BECOME PRESIDENT, THE AMOUNT OF MONEY NEEDED IS SOMETHING TREMENDOUS. WE THINK THAT WHAT WE HAVE TO SPEND HERE IS MUCH TOO MUCH, BUT IT IS NOTHING AT ALL COMPARED TO WHAT IS SPENT IN OTHER COUNTRIES UNQUOTE.

3. ON THE RELATIVE POWER OF THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT AND THE INDIAN PRIME MINISTER, SHE COMMENTED ASHVINI MOWS: QUOTE THEN WE COME TO YOUR QUESTION ABOUT AUTHORITY AND POWER. NOW I DO NOT KNOW WHAT VISION THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE OF WHAT POWER THE INDIAN PRIME MINISTER HAS. BUT IT IS NOTHING COMPARED TO WHAT THE PRESIDENT HAS IN AMERICA OR IN FRANCE OR IN MOST OTHER COUNTRIES...WE ARE SO HEDGED IN BY THE RULES WE HAVE MADE THAT IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT EVEN TO APPOINT A PERSON WITHOUT GOING THROUGH ALL THE REQUIRED RULES. WE HAVE JUST TRIED TO MAKE A SMALL CHANGE. SO FAR WE HAVE BEEN GOING LARGELY BY SENIORITY...IN EACH STATE IT IS THE CHIEF MINISTER WHO IS THE BOSS, AND THE PRIME MINISTER CAN ONLY TRY AND PERSUADE HIM. BUT THERE IS NO METHOD BY WHICH I CAN FORCE A CHIEF MINISTER. CONTRARY TO WHAT SOME PEOPLE PROPAGATE, I CANNOT BRING IN ANYBODY AS THE CHIEF MINISTER. I CAN ONLY BRING A PERSON WHO WILL BE SUPPORTED BY OUR PARTY THERE. NOW THE PARTY WILL SUPPORT ONLY SUCH A PERSON AS IT THINKS HAS POPULAR SUPPORT, BECAUSE OTHERWISE HE CANNOT HELP IT IN ELECTIONS. SO WHEN YOU COME DOWN TO BRASS TACKS, MY POWER IS REALLY QUITE LIMITED. UNQUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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4. ON FOREIGN CRITICISM, THE PRIME MINISTER MADE THE FOLLOWING GENERAL COMMENT: QUOTE...THERE IS RESENTMENT AGAINST INDIA IN SOME ELEMENTS ABROAD. THEY ARE SCATTERED ALL OVER THE WORLD; THEY ARE NOT CONFINED TO ANY ONE COUNTRY. THIS HAS BEEN GROWING. IT WAS A SYSTEMATIC ATTEMPT, IN WHICH SOME FOREIGN NEWSPAPERS WERE ACTIVE TO TRY TO DENIGRATE MY FATHER. THEY WERE DELIBERATELY SAYING THAT HE WAS A NOBODY AT

THE BANDUNG CONFERENCE. HE WAS VERY MUCH A CENTRE PIECE, BUT
HE DELIBERATELY WANTED TO ENCOURAGE CHINA AND VARIOUS
OTHER COUNTRIES. UNQUOTE.
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